

States. The original sponsor nonetheless retains financial responsibility for the beneficiary under the terms of the guarantee of financial support and intent to petition for legal custody which that sponsor executed, unless that responsibility is assumed by a new sponsor. In the event that the new sponsor does not comply with the terms of the new guarantee of financial support and intent to petition for legal custody and if, for any reason, that guarantee is not enforced, the original sponsor again becomes financially responsible for the beneficiary.

(2) *One-stage processing of petition.* If the petitioner chooses to have the petition processed under the one-stage processing procedure described in paragraph (e) of this section, the petitioner must submit all evidence required by paragraph (f)(1) of this section.

(g) *Decision*—(1) *General.* The director shall notify the petitioner of the decision and, if the petition is denied, of the reasons for the denial. If the petition is denied, the petitioner may appeal the decision under part 103 of this chapter.

(2) *Denial upon completion of preliminary processing.* The director may deny the petition upon completion of the preliminary processing under paragraph (d) of this section for:

(i) Failure to establish that there is reason to believe the alien was fathered by a United States citizen; or

(ii) Failure to meet the sponsorship requirements if the fingerprints of the sponsor, required in paragraph (f)(1) of this section, were submitted during the preliminary processing and the completed background check of the sponsor discloses adverse information resulting in a finding that the sponsor is not of good moral character.

(3) *Denial upon completion of final processing.* The director may deny the petition upon completion of final processing if it is determined that the sponsorship requirements, or one or more of the other applicable requirements, have not been met.

(4) *Denial upon completion of one-stage processing.* The director may deny the petition upon completion of all processing if any of the applicable requirements in a case being processed under the one-stage processing described in

paragraph (e) of this section are not met.

(h) *Classification of Public Law 97–359 Amerasian.* If the petition is approved the beneficiary is classified as follows:

(1) An unmarried beneficiary under the age of twenty-one is classified as the child of a United States citizen under section 201(b) of the Act;

(2) An unmarried beneficiary twenty-one years of age or older is classified as the unmarried son or daughter of a United States citizen under section 203(a)(1) of the Act; and

(3) A married beneficiary is classified as the married son or daughter of a United States citizen under section 203(a)(3) of the Act.

(i) *Enforcement of affidavit of financial support and intent to petition for legal custody.* A guarantee of financial support and intent to petition for legal custody on Form I-361 may be enforced against the alien's sponsor in a civil suit brought by the Attorney General in the United States District Court for the district in which the sponsor resides, except that the sponsor's estate is not liable under the guarantee if the sponsor dies or is adjudicated as bankrupt under title 11, United States Code. After admission to the United States, if the beneficiary of a petition requires enforcement of the guarantee of financial support and intent to petition for legal custody executed by the beneficiary's sponsor, the beneficiary may file Form I-363 with the Service office having jurisdiction over the beneficiary's residence in the United States. If the beneficiary is under eighteen years of age, any agency or individual (other than the sponsor) having legal custody of the beneficiary, or a legal guardian acting on the alien's behalf, may file Form I-363.

[57 FR 41066, Sept. 9, 1992, as amended at 63 FR 12986, Mar. 17, 1998]

#### **§ 204.5 Petitions for employment-based immigrants.**

(a) *General.* A petition to classify an alien under section 203(b)(1), 203(b)(2), or 203(b)(3) of the Act must be filed on Form I-140, Petition for Immigrant Worker. A petition to classify an alien under section 203(b)(4) (as it relates to special immigrants under section 101(a)(27)(C)) must be filed on kForm I-

360, Petition for Amerasian, Widow, or Special Immigrant. A separate Form I-140 or I-360 must be filed for each beneficiary, accompanied by the applicable fee. A petition is considered properly filed if it is:

(1) Accepted for processing under the provisions of part 103;

(2) Accompanied by any required individual labor certification, application for Schedule A designation, or evidence that the alien's occupation qualifies as a shortage occupation within the Department of Labor's Labor Market Information Pilot Program; and

(3) Accompanied by any other required supporting documentation.

(b) *Jurisdiction.* Form I-140 or I-360 must be filed with the Service Center having jurisdiction over the intended place of employment, unless specifically designated for local filing by the Associate Commissioner for Examinations.

(c) *Filing petition.* Any United States employer desiring and intending to employ an alien may file a petition for classification of the alien under section 203(b)(1)(B), 203(b)(1)(C), 203(b)(2), or 203(b)(3) of the Act. An alien, or any person in the alien's behalf, may file a petition for classification under section 203(b)(1)(A) or 203(b)(4) of the Act (as it relates to special immigrants under section 101(a)(27)(C) of the Act).

(d) *Priority date.* The priority date of any petition filed for classification under section 203(b) of the Act which is accompanied by an individual labor certification from the Department of Labor shall be the date the request for certification was accepted for processing by any office within the employment service system of the Department of Labor. The priority date of any petition filed for classification under section 203(b) of the Act which is accompanied by an application for Schedule A designation or with evidence that the alien's occupation is a shortage occupation within the Department of Labor's Labor Market Information Pilot Program shall be the date the completed, signed petition (including all initial evidence and the correct fee) is properly filed with the Service. The priority date of a petition filed for classification as a special immigrant under section 203(b)(4) of the Act shall

be the date the completed, signed petition (including all initial evidence and the correct fee) is properly filed with the Service. The priority date of an alien who filed for classification as a special immigrant prior to October 1, 1991, and who is the beneficiary of an approved I-360 petition after October 1, 1991, shall be the date the alien applied for an immigrant visa or adjustment of status. In the case of a special immigrant alien who applied for adjustment before October 1, 1991, Form I-360 may be accepted and adjudicated at a Service District Office or sub-office.

(e) *Retention of section 203(b) (1), (2), or (3) priority date.* A petition approved on behalf of an alien under sections 203(b) (1), (2), or (3) of the Act accords the alien the priority date of the approved petition for any subsequently filed petition for any classification under sections 203(b) (1), (2), or (3) of the Act for which the alien may qualify. In the event that the alien is the beneficiary of multiple petitions under sections 203(b) (1), (2), or (3) of the Act, the alien shall be entitled to the earliest priority date. A petition revoked under sections 204(e) or 205 of the Act will not confer a priority date, nor will any priority date be established as a result of a denied petition. A priority date is not transferable to another alien.

(f) *Maintaining the priority date of a third or sixth preference petition filed prior to October 1, 1991.* Any petition filed before October 1, 1991, and approved on any date, to accord status under section 203(a)(3) or 203(a)(6) of the Act, as in effect before October 1, 1991, shall be deemed a petition approved to accord status under section 203(b)(2) or within the appropriate classification under section 203(b)(3), respectively, of the Act as in effect on or after October 1, 1991, provided that the alien applies for an immigrant visa or adjustment of status within the two years following notification that an immigrant visa is immediately available for his or her use.

(g) *Initial evidence*—(1) *General.* Specific requirements for initial supporting documents for the various employment-based immigrant classifications are set forth in this section. In general, ordinary legible photocopies of

such documents (except for labor certifications from the Department of Labor) will be acceptable for initial filing and approval. However, at the discretion of the director, original documents may be required in individual cases. Evidence relating to qualifying experience or training shall be in the form of letter(s) from current or former employer(s) or trainer(s) and shall include the name, address, and title of the writer, and a specific description of the duties performed by the alien or of the training received. If such evidence is unavailable, other documentation relating to the alien's experience or training will be considered.

(2) *Ability of prospective employer to pay wage.* Any petition filed by or for an employment-based immigrant which requires an offer of employment must be accompanied by evidence that the prospective United States employer has the ability to pay the proffered wage. The petitioner must demonstrate this ability at the time the priority date is established and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. Evidence of this ability shall be either in the form of copies of annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements. In a case where the prospective United States employer employs 100 or more workers, the director may accept a statement from a financial officer of the organization which establishes the prospective employer's ability to pay the proffered wage. In appropriate cases, additional evidence, such as profit/loss statements, bank account records, or personnel records, may be submitted by the petitioner or requested by the Service.

(h) *Aliens with extraordinary ability.*

(1) An alien, or any person on behalf of the alien, may file an I-140 visa petition for classification under section 203(b)(1)(A) of the Act as an alien of extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics.

(2) *Definition.* As used in this section:

*Extraordinary ability* means a level of expertise indicating that the individual is one of that small percentage who have risen to the very top of the field of endeavor.

(3) *Initial evidence.* A petition for an alien of extraordinary ability must be

accompanied by evidence that the alien has sustained national or international acclaim and that his or her achievements have been recognized in the field of expertise. Such evidence shall include evidence of a one-time achievement (that is, a major, international recognized award), or at least three of the following:

(i) Documentation of the alien's receipt of lesser nationally or internationally recognized prizes or awards for excellence in the field of endeavor;

(ii) Documentation of the alien's membership in associations in the field for which classification is sought, which require outstanding achievements of their members, as judged by recognized national or international experts in their disciplines or fields;

(iii) Published material about the alien in professional or major trade publications or other major media, relating to the alien's work in the field for which classification is sought. Such evidence shall include the title, date, and author of the material, and any necessary translation;

(iv) Evidence of the alien's participation, either individually or on a panel, as a judge of the work of others in the same or an allied field of specification for which classification is sought;

(v) Evidence of the alien's original scientific, scholarly, artistic, athletic, or business-related contributions of major significance in the field;

(vi) Evidence of the alien's authorship of scholarly articles in the field, in professional or major trade publications or other major media;

(vii) Evidence of the display of the alien's work in the field at artistic exhibitions or showcases;

(viii) Evidence that the alien has performed in a leading or critical role for organizations or establishments that have a distinguished reputation;

(ix) Evidence that the alien has commanded a high salary or other significantly high remuneration for services, in relation to others in the field; or

(x) Evidence of commercial successes in the performing arts, as shown by box office receipts or record, cassette, compact disk, or video sales.

(4) If the above standards do not readily apply to the beneficiary's occupation, the petitioner may submit comparable evidence to establish the beneficiary's eligibility.

(5) *No offer of employment required.* Neither an offer for employment in the United States nor a labor certification is required for this classification; however, the petition must be accompanied by clear evidence that the alien is coming to the United States to continue work in the area of expertise. Such evidence may include letter(s) from prospective employer(s), evidence of pre-arranged commitments such as contracts, or a statement from the beneficiary detailing plans on how he or she intends to continue his or her work in the United States.

(i) *Outstanding professors and researchers.* (1) Any United States employer desiring and intending to employ a professor or researcher who is outstanding in an academic field under section 203(b)(1)(B) of the Act may file an I-140 visa petition for such classification.

(2) *Definitions.* As used in this section:

*Academic field* means a body of specialized knowledge offered for study at an accredited United States university or institution of higher education.

*Permanent*, in reference to a research position, means either tenured, tenure-track, or for a term of indefinite or unlimited duration, and in which the employee will ordinarily have an expectation of continued employment unless there is good cause for termination.

(3) *Initial evidence.* A petition for an outstanding professor or researcher must be accompanied by:

(i) Evidence that the professor or researcher is recognized internationally as outstanding in the academic field specified in the petition. Such evidence shall consist of at least two of the following:

(A) Documentation of the alien's receipt of major prizes or awards for outstanding achievement in the academic field;

(B) Documentation of the alien's membership in associations in the academic field which require outstanding achievements of their members;

(C) Published material in professional publications written by others

about the alien's work in the academic field. Such material shall include the title, date, and author of the material, and any necessary translation;

(D) Evidence of the alien's participation, either individually or on a panel, as the judge of the work of others in the same or an allied academic field;

(E) Evidence of the alien's original scientific or scholarly research contributions to the academic field; or

(F) Evidence of the alien's authorship of scholarly books or articles (in scholarly journals with international circulation) in the academic field;

(ii) Evidence that the alien has at least three years of experience in teaching and/or research in the academic field. Experience in teaching or research while working on an advanced degree will only be acceptable if the alien has acquired the degree, and if the teaching duties were such that he or she had full responsibility for the class taught or if the research conducted toward the degree has been recognized within the academic field as outstanding. Evidence of teaching and/or research experience shall be in the form of letter(s) from current or former employer(s) and shall include the name, address, and title of the writer, and a specific description of the duties performed by the alien; and

(iii) An offer of employment from a prospective United States employer. A labor certification is not required for this classification. The offer of employment shall be in the form of a letter from:

(A) A United States university or institution of higher learning offering the alien a tenured or tenure-track teaching position in the alien's academic field;

(B) A United States university or institution of higher learning offering the alien a permanent research position in the alien's academic field; or

(C) A department, division, or institute of a private employer offering the alien a permanent research position in the alien's academic field. The department, division, or institute must demonstrate that it employs at least three persons full-time in research positions, and that it has achieved documented accomplishments in an academic field.

(j) *Certain multinational executives and managers.* (1) A United States employer may file a petition on Form I-140 for classification of an alien under section 203(b)(1)(C) of the Act as a multinational executive or manager.

(2) *Definitions.* As used in this section:

*Affiliate* means:

(A) One of two subsidiaries both of which are owned and controlled by the same parent or individual;

(B) One of two legal entities owned and controlled by the same group of individuals, each individual owning and controlling approximately the same share or proportion of each entity; or

(C) In the case of a partnership that is organized in the United States to provide accounting services, along with managerial and/or consulting services, and markets its accounting services under an internationally recognized name under an agreement with a worldwide coordinating organization that is owned and controlled by the member accounting firms, a partnership (or similar organization) that is organized outside the United States to provide accounting services shall be considered to be an affiliate of the United States partnership if it markets its accounting services under the same internationally recognized name under the agreement with the worldwide coordinating organization of which the United States partnership is also a member.

*Doing business* means the regular, systematic, and continuous provision of goods and/or services by a firm, corporation, or other entity and does not include the mere presence of an agent or office.

*Executive capacity* means an assignment within an organization in which the employee primarily:

(A) Directs the management of the organization or a major component or function of the organization;

(B) Establishes the goals and policies of the organization, component, or function;

(C) Exercises wide latitude in discretionary decisionmaking; and

(D) Receives only general supervision or direction from higher level executives, the board of directors, or stockholders of the organization.

*Managerial capacity* means an assignment within an organization in which the employee primarily:

(A) Manages the organization, or a department, subdivision, function, or component of the organization;

(B) Supervises and controls the work of other supervisory, professional, or managerial employees, or manages an essential function within the organization, or a department or subdivision of the organization;

(C) If another employee or other employees are directly supervised, has the authority to hire and fire or recommend those as well as other personnel actions (such as promotion and leave authorization), or, if no other employee is directly supervised, functions at a senior level within the organizational hierarchy or with respect to the function managed; and

(D) Exercises direction over the day-to-day operations of the activity or function for which the employee has authority.

*Multinational* means that the qualifying entity, or its affiliate, or subsidiary, conducts business in two or more countries, one of which is the United States.

*Subsidiary* means a firm, corporation, or other legal entity of which a parent owns, directly or indirectly, more than half of the entity and controls the entity; or owns, directly or indirectly, half of the entity and controls the entity; or owns, directly or indirectly, 50 percent of a 50-50 joint venture and has equal control and veto power over the entity; or owns, directly or indirectly, less than half of the entity, but in fact controls the entity.

(3) *Initial evidence*—(i) *Required evidence.* A petition for a multinational executive or manager must be accompanied by a statement from an authorized official of the petitioning United States employer which demonstrates that:

(A) If the alien is outside the United States, in the three years immediately preceding the filing of the petition the alien has been employed outside the United States for at least one year in a managerial or executive capacity by a firm or corporation, or other legal entity, or by an affiliate or subsidiary of

such a firm or corporation or other legal entity; or

(B) If the alien is already in the United States working for the same employer or a subsidiary or affiliate of the firm or corporation, or other legal entity by which the alien was employed overseas, in the three years preceding entry as a nonimmigrant, the alien was employed by the entity abroad for at least one year in a managerial or executive capacity;

(C) The prospective employer in the United States is the same employer or a subsidiary or affiliate of the firm or corporation or other legal entity by which the alien was employed overseas; and

(D) The prospective United States employer has been doing business for at least one year.

(i) *Appropriate additional evidence.* In appropriate cases, the director may request additional evidence.

(4) *Determining managerial or executive capacities—(i) Supervisors as managers.* A first-line supervisor is not considered to be acting in a managerial capacity merely by virtue of his or her supervisory duties unless the employees supervised are professional.

(ii) *Staffing levels.* If staffing levels are used as a factor in determining whether an individual is acting in a managerial or executive capacity, the reasonable needs of the organization, component, or function, in light of the overall purpose and stage of development of the organization, component, or function, shall be taken into account. An individual shall not be considered to be acting in a managerial or executive capacity merely on the basis of the number of employees that the individual supervises or has supervised or directs or has directed.

(5) *Offer of employment.* No labor certification is required for this classification; however, the prospective employer in the United States must furnish a job offer in the form of a statement which indicates that the alien is to be employed in the United States in a managerial or executive capacity. Such letter must clearly describe the duties to be performed by the alien.

(k) *Aliens who are members of the professions holding advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability.* (1) Any

United States employer may file a petition on Form I-140 for classification of an alien under section 203(b)(2) of the Act as an alien who is a member of the professions holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business. If an alien is claiming exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business and is seeking an exemption from the requirement of a job offer in the United States pursuant to section 203(b)(2)(B) of the Act, then the alien, or anyone in the alien's behalf, may be the petitioner.

(2) *Definitions.* As used in this section: *Advanced degree* means any United States academic or professional degree or a foreign equivalent degree above that of baccalaureate. A United States baccalaureate degree or a foreign equivalent degree followed by at least five years of progressive experience in the specialty shall be considered the equivalent of a master's degree. If a doctoral degree is customarily required by the specialty, the alien must have a United States doctorate or a foreign equivalent degree.

*Exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business* means a degree of expertise significantly above that ordinarily encountered in the sciences, arts, or business.

*Profession* means one of the occupations listed in section 101(a)(32) of the Act, as well as any occupation for which a United States baccalaureate degree or its foreign equivalent is the minimum requirement for entry into the occupation.

(3) *Initial evidence.* The petition must be accompanied by documentation showing that the alien is a professional holding an advanced degree or an alien of exceptional ability in the sciences, the arts, or business.

(i) To show that the alien is a professional holding an advanced degree, the petition must be accompanied by:

(A) An official academic record showing that the alien has a United States advanced degree or a foreign equivalent degree; or

(B) An official academic record showing that the alien has a United States baccalaureate degree or a foreign equivalent degree, and evidence in the form of letters from current or former employer(s) showing that the alien has

at least five years of progressive post-baccalaureate experience in the specialty.

(ii) To show that the alien is an alien of exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business, the petition must be accompanied by at least three of the following:

(A) An official academic record showing that the alien has a degree, diploma, certificate, or similar award from a college, university, school, or other institution of learning relating to the area of exceptional ability;

(B) Evidence in the form of letter(s) from current or former employer(s) showing that the alien has at least ten years of full-time experience in the occupation for which he or she is being sought;

(C) A license to practice the profession or certification for a particular profession or occupation;

(D) Evidence that the alien has commanded a salary, or other remuneration for services, which demonstrates exceptional ability;

(E) Evidence of membership in professional associations; or

(F) Evidence of recognition for achievements and significant contributions to the industry or field by peers, governmental entities, or professional or business organizations.

(iii) If the above standards do not readily apply to the beneficiary's occupation, the petitioner may submit comparable evidence to establish the beneficiary's eligibility.

(4) *Labor certification or evidence that alien qualifies for Labor Market Information Pilot Program*—(i) *General*. Every petition under this classification must be accompanied by an individual labor certification from the Department of Labor, by an application for Schedule A designation (if applicable), or by documentation to establish that the alien qualifies for one of the shortage occupations in the Department of Labor's Labor Market Information Pilot Program. To apply for Schedule A designation or to establish that the alien's occupation is within the Labor Market Information Program, a fully executed uncertified Form ETA-750 in duplicate must accompany the petition. The job offer portion of the individual labor certification, Schedule A application,

or Pilot Program application must demonstrate that the job requires a professional holding an advanced degree or the equivalent or an alien of exceptional ability.

(ii) *Exemption from job offer*. The director may exempt the requirement of a job offer, and thus of a labor certification, for aliens of exceptional ability in the sciences, arts, or business if exemption would be in the national interest. To apply for the exemption, the petitioner must submit Form ETA-750B, Statement of Qualifications of Alien, in duplicate, as well as evidence to support the claim that such exemption would be in the national interest.

(1) *Skilled workers, professionals, and other workers*. (1) Any United States employer may file a petition on Form I-140 for classification of an alien under section 203(b)(3) as a skilled worker, professional, or other (unskilled) worker.

(2) *Definitions*. As used in this part:

*Other worker* means a qualified alien who is capable, at the time of petitioning for this classification, of performing unskilled labor (requiring less than two years training or experience), not of a temporary or seasonal nature, for which qualified workers are not available in the United States.

*Professional* means a qualified alien who holds at least a United States baccalaureate degree or a foreign equivalent degree and who is a member of the professions.

*Skilled worker* means an alien who is capable, at the time of petitioning for this classification, of performing skilled labor (requiring at least two years training or experience), not of a temporary or seasonal nature, for which qualified workers are not available in the United States. Relevant post-secondary education may be considered as training for the purposes of this provision.

(3) *Initial evidence*—(i) *Labor certification or evidence that alien qualifies for Labor Market Information Pilot Program*. Every petition under this classification must be accompanied by an individual labor certification from the Department of Labor, by an application for Schedule A designation, or by documentation to establish that the alien

qualifies for one of the shortage occupations in the Department of Labor's Labor Market Information Pilot Program. To apply for Schedule A designation or to establish that the alien's occupation is a shortage occupation with the Labor Market Pilot Program, a fully executed uncertified Form ETA-750 in duplicate must accompany the petition. The job offer portion of an individual labor certification, Schedule A application, or Pilot Program application for a professional must demonstrate that the job requires the minimum of a baccalaureate degree.

(ii) *Other documentation*—(A) *General*. Any requirements of training or experience for skilled workers, professionals, or other workers must be supported by letters from trainers or employers giving the name, address, and title of the trainer or employer, and a description of the training received or the experience of the alien.

(B) *Skilled workers*. If the petition is for a skilled worker, the petition must be accompanied by evidence that the alien meets the educational, training or experience, and any other requirements of the individual labor certification, meets the requirements for Schedule A designation, or meets the requirements for the Labor Market Information Pilot Program occupation designation. The minimum requirements for this classification are at least two years of training or experience.

(C) *Professionals*. If the petition is for a professional, the petition must be accompanied by evidence that the alien holds a United States baccalaureate degree or a foreign equivalent degree and by evidence that the alien is a member of the professions. Evidence of a baccalaureate degree shall be in the form of an official college or university record showing the date the baccalaureate degree was awarded and the area of concentration of study. To show that the alien is a member of the professions, the petitioner must submit evidence showing that the minimum of a baccalaureate degree is required for entry into the occupation.

(D) *Other workers*. If the petition is for an unskilled (other) worker, it must be accompanied by evidence that the alien meets any educational, training

and experience, and other requirements of the labor certification.

(4) *Differentiating between skilled and other workers*. The determination of whether a worker is a skilled or other worker will be based on the requirements of training and/or experience placed on the job by the prospective employer, as certified by the Department of Labor. In the case of a Schedule A occupation or a shortage occupation within the Labor Market Pilot Program, the petitioner will be required to establish to the director that the job is a skilled job, i.e., one which requires at least two years of training and/or experience.

(m) *Religious workers*—(1) An alien, or any person in behalf of the alien, may file an I-360 visa petition for classification under section 203(b)(4) of the Act as a section 101(a)(27)(C) special immigrant religious worker. Such a petition may be filed by or for an alien, who (either abroad or in the United States) for at least the two years immediately preceding the filing of the petition has been a member of a religious denomination which has a bona fide nonprofit religious organization in the United States. The alien must be coming to the United States solely for the purpose of carrying on the vocation of a minister of that religious denomination, working for the organization at the organization's request in a professional capacity in a religious vocation or occupation for the organization or a bona fide organization which is affiliated with the religious denomination and is exempt from taxation as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at the request of the organization. All three types of religious workers must have been performing the vocation, professional work, or other work continuously (either abroad or in the United States) for at least the two-year period immediately preceding the filing of the petition. Professional workers and other workers must obtain permanent resident status through immigration or adjustment of status on or before September 30, 1997, in order to immigrate under section 203(b)(4) of the Act as section 101(a)(27)(C) special immigrant religious workers.



(2) *Definitions.* As used in this section:

*Bona fide nonprofit religious organization in the United States* means an organization exempt from taxation as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as it relates to religious organizations, or one that has never sought such exemption but establishes to the satisfaction of the Service that it would be eligible therefor if it had applied for tax exempt status.

*Bona fide organization which is affiliated with the religious denomination* means an organization which is closely associated with the religious denomination and which is exempt from taxation as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as it relates to religious organizations.

*Minister* means an individual duly authorized by a recognized religious denomination to conduct religious worship and to perform other duties usually performed by authorized members of the clergy of that religion. In all cases, there must be a reasonable connection between the activities performed and the religious calling of the minister. The term does not include a lay preacher not authorized to perform such duties.

*Professional capacity* means an activity in a religious vocation or occupation for which the minimum of a United States baccalaureate degree or a foreign equivalent degree is required.

*Religious denomination* means a religious group or community of believers having some form of ecclesiastical government, a creed or statement of faith, some form of worship, a formal or informal code of doctrine and discipline, religious services and ceremonies, established places of religious worship, religious congregations, or comparable indicia of a bona fide religious denomination. For the purposes of this definition, an inter-denominational religious organization which is exempt from taxation pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 will be treated as a religious denomination.

*Religious occupation* means an activity which relates to a traditional religious function. Examples of individuals in religious occupations include, but are not limited to, liturgical workers,

religious instructors, religious counselors, cantors, catechists, workers in religious hospitals or religious health care facilities, missionaries, religious translators, or religious broadcasters. This group does not include janitors, maintenance workers, clerks, fund raisers, or persons solely involved in the solicitation of donations.

*Religious vocation* means a calling to religious life evidenced by the demonstration of commitment practiced in the religious denomination, such as the taking of vows. Examples of individuals with a religious vocation include, but are not limited to, nuns, monks, and religious brothers and sisters.

(3) *Initial evidence.* Unless otherwise specified, each petition for a religious worker must be accompanied by:

(i) Evidence that the organization qualifies as a nonprofit organization in the form of either:

(A) Documentation showing that it is exempt from taxation in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as it relates to religious organizations (in appropriate cases, evidence of the organization's assets and methods of operation and the organization's papers of incorporation under applicable state law may be requested); or

(B) Such documentation as is required by the Internal Revenue Service to establish eligibility for exemption under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as it relates to religious organizations; and

(ii) A letter from an authorized official of the religious organization in the United States which (as applicable to the particular alien) establishes:

(A) That, immediately prior to the filing of the petition, the alien has the required two years of membership in the denomination and the required two years of experience in the religious vocation, professional religious work, or other religious work; and

(B) That, if the alien is a minister, he or she has authorization to conduct religious worship and to perform other duties usually performed by authorized members of the clergy, including a detailed description of such authorized duties. In appropriate cases, the certificate of ordination or authorization may be requested; or

(C) That, if the alien is a religious professional, he or she has at least a United States baccalaureate or its foreign equivalent required for entry into the religious profession. In all professional cases, an official academic record showing that the alien has the required degree must be submitted; or

(D) That, if the alien is to work in another religious vocation or occupation, he or she is qualified in the religious vocation or occupation. Evidence of such qualifications may include, but need not be limited to, evidence establishing that the alien is a nun, monk, or religious brother, or that the type of work to be done relates to a traditional religious function.

(iii) If the alien is to work in a non-ministerial and non-professional capacity for a bona fide religious organization which is affiliated with the religious denomination, the letter from the authorized official must explain how the affiliation exists. A tax-exempt certificate indicating that the affiliated organization is exempt from taxation in accordance with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as it relates to religious organizations is required in this instance.

(iv) In appropriate cases, the director may request appropriate additional evidence relating to the eligibility under section 203(b)(4) of the Act of the religious organization, the alien, or the affiliated organization.

(4) *Job offer.* The letter from the authorized official of the religious organization in the United States must also state how the alien will be solely carrying on the vocation of a minister (including any terms of payment for services or other remuneration), or how the alien will be paid or remunerated if the alien will work in a professional religious capacity or in other religious work. The documentation should clearly indicate that the alien will not be solely dependent on supplemental employment or solicitation of funds for support. In doubtful cases, additional evidence such as bank letters, recent audits, church membership figures, and/or the number of individuals currently receiving compensation may be requested.

(n) *Closing action—(1) Approval.* An approved employment-based petition

will be forwarded to the United States Consulate selected by the petitioner and indicated on the petition. If a United States Consulate is not designated, the petition will be forwarded to the consulate having jurisdiction over the place of the alien's last residence abroad. If the petition indicates that the alien will apply for adjustment to permanent residence in the United States, the approved petition will be retained by the Service for consideration with the application for permanent resident (Form I-485).

(2) *Denial.* The denial of a petition for classification under section 203(b)(1), 203(b)(2), 203(b)(3), or 203(b)(4) of the Act (as it relates to special immigrants under section 101(a)(27)(C) of the Act) shall be appealable to the Associate Commissioner for Examinations. The petitioner shall be informed in plain language of the reasons for denial and of his or her right to appeal.

(3) *Validity of approved petitions.* Unless revoked under section 203(e) or 205 of the Act, an employment-based petition is valid indefinitely.

[56 FR 60905, Nov. 29, 1991, as amended at 59 FR 502, Jan. 5, 1994; 59 FR 27229, May 26, 1994; 60 FR 29753, June 6, 1995; 61 FR 33305, June 27, 1996]

#### § 204.6 Petitions for employment creation aliens.

(a) *General.* A petition to classify an alien under section 203(b)(5) of the Act must be filed on Form I-526, Immigrant Petition by Alien Entrepreneur. The petition must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. Before a petition is considered properly filed, the petition must be signed by the petitioner, and the initial supporting documentation required by this section must be attached. Legible photocopies of supporting documents will ordinarily be acceptable for initial filing and approval. However, at the discretion of the director, original documents may be required.

(b) *Jurisdiction.* The petition must be filed with the Service Center having jurisdiction over the area in which the new commercial enterprise is or will be principally doing business.

(c) *Eligibility to file.* A petition for classification as an alien entrepreneur